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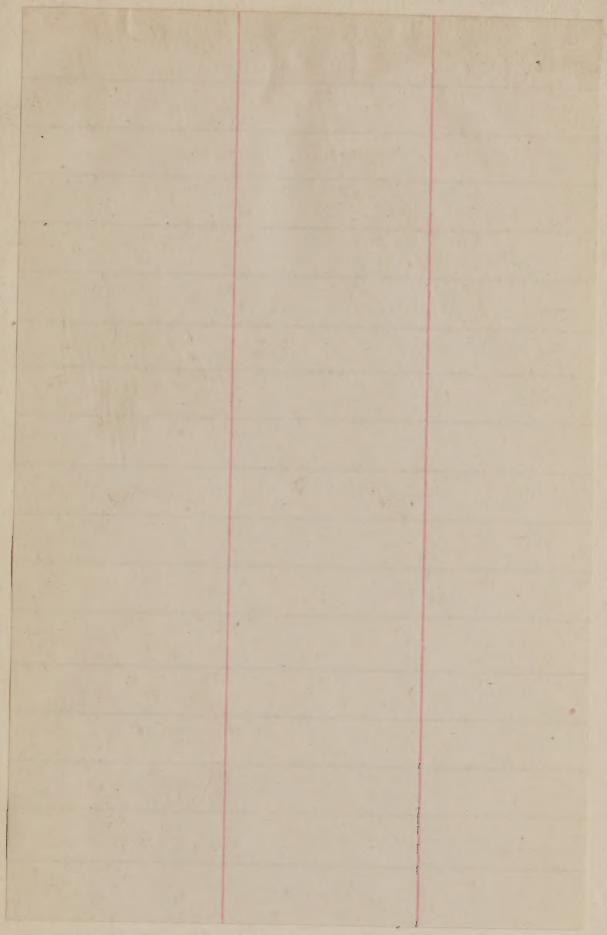

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SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE

REVEREND ABNER MORSE,

AS PASTOR OF THE

7541.341

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN NANTUCKET,

DEC. 16, 1819.

BY PHINEAS FISH, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN MARSHFIELD.

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SERMON.

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GALATIANS IV. 11.

I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

THE greatest of mankind cannot command that success to their designs and labours, which they ardently desire. We have a melancholy illustration of this remark in St. Paul's ministerial connexion with the people, to whom the words of the text were addressed. His intercourse with them at first was of the most flattering kind. The Galatians received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Such was their partiality to his person and ministry, that, had it been possible, they "would have plucked out their own eyes and have given them to him." They appeared to profit by his preaching; received the doctrines of the Gospel; began their course in the spirit; and for a time they ran well. But the most favourable beginnings do not always terminate in the most happy results. Many, that hear the Gospel, manifest a very wavering, unsettled disposition; easily forget what has been inculcated on them, and, for want of established principle, are easily drawn over to the side of errour. The Galatians listened to cor-

rupt and self-interested teachers—discarded the doctrine of justification by faith only—trusted in the deeds of the law for righteousness: addicting themselves to observances merely ceremonial, they regarded "days, and months, and times, and years," according to the exploded ritual of Moses, and were willing to be in bondage again to the weak and beggarly elements of that system of forms and shadows. So lamentably were they turned about, and so deeply had they imbibed the errours of their seducers, that the Apostle charges them with having embraced another Gospel; asserts that Christ had become of none effect, because they had fallen from that system, which alone ensures divine grace to men. Good reason had he then for uttering the complaint of the text. The feelings of St. Paul are not peculiar to himself. *Every* real minister of Christ will, in like circumstances, be conscious of the same emotions, and express them in a similar manner.

I. What are the *objects*, in view of which a *Christian minister labours?* These are in general, to exhibit truth, and to render it effectual in reforming the hearts and lives of men. If, through the preaching of the Gospel, men are not aroused from their natural lethargy; convicted of sin; cut off from self-dependence; induced to receive Christ for all the purposes, for which he has been exhibited to men, and to pursue to the end of life *holiness* in all its branches, the end of this sacred institution is defeated.

According to the Scriptures, the object of preaching is the display of divine benevolence in the salvation of souls. By this mean it pleases God to impart life to

the dead; light to them that sit in darkness; liberty to captives, and prelibations of heavenly blessedness to bosoms before the native possession of unrest and despair. When St. Paul received his commission to preach the Gospel, the Lord announced to him the object of his designation in these words,—"I now send thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." The actual effects of his preaching, the Apostle describes in his first epistle to the Thessalonians. "Our Gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance—and ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." The fruits of the Apostle's labours among them were so signal as to excite the attention of surrounding regions. "Ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had to you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." In another place he observes, "for this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard

of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

Preaching the Gospel is therefore, by the appointment of the great Head of the church, an institution, whose object is the most benevolent and useful, which the world ever witnessed. It has been the source of good to men already more extensively, than any other mean. It will, to the end of time, be the occasion of blessings still more rich and wonderful.

These blessings, the faithful minister of Christ wishes to see his people enjoying. He does not think his object attained, when his people respect him, yield an external compliance with his directions, and furnish him with the means of subsistence. These things are indispensable in their place. These are duties binding on them, and grateful to him. The spirit of religion requires the people to "honour the Lord with their substance," and to "esteem their pastors very highly in love for their work's sake." But though not wholly indifferent to such considerations, in preaching the Gospel, he has an inconceivably higher purpose. In view of this, it may be truly said, that he "seeks not *theirs*, but *them*." His labours have a view to the Christian edification of the souls committed to his charge. His prayer is, that grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, may be multiplied unto them. His unfeigned wish above all other things is, that the souls of his people may be in health and prosper; that the members of his flock may vie with each other in their love and devotion to Jesus Christ; that they may

"consider one another, to provoke to love and to good works;" that religion may be viewed by the world as the supreme good, and that God may be glorified in all things.

What servant of Jesus Christ realizes such success of his labours to the extent of his wishes! How many are compelled to respond to the prophet's complaint—"I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought," and to declare to their people with St. Paul, "I am afraid," &c. This melancholy state of things we shall contemplate more nearly, by inquiring, in the second place,

II. When the minister of Christ may be said to bestow "labour in vain?"—A sense of unprofitableness among his people is one of the greatest trials of a minister's life. It deadens exertion, impairs his comforts, depresses his spirits, and may even have a serious influence upon his health, and conduce not a little to bring him down to a premature grave. To be constrained to say with St. Paul, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart," is a state so gloomy and exhausting, that flesh and blood cannot endure it long, unless powerfully supported from on high. There is cause for the Apostle's complaint,

1. When the people flagrantly neglect religious means. In every society there will be some, and in certain places, alarming numbers, who undervalue and neglect the institutions of God. The Bible, unconsulted, slumbers in their dwellings, encumbered with the dust of years; prayer is a strange work; the holy Sabbath is profaned by sloth or sinful indulgence; the solemn and interesting duties of the house

of God, the ministrations of his word, are treated as the inventions of men. The Christian watchman, concerned for their awful state, visits them; warns them of the consequences of an impious life; entreats them to escape from the wrath to come; possibly prevails on them for a season to assume a greater degree of decency. But still unhallowed nature lives, revives again, and draws back the constrained worshipper to his wonted course of ungodliness. When the preacher finds that, through the laziness and impiety of the people, he is left to preach only to empty seats and naked walls; when no better success follows, if religious opportunities are brought even to their doors; when entreaty and solemn remonstrance work no reformation; when perhaps the preacher's very presence is eluded, for the sake of avoiding importunity on a disagreeable subject; then is the time to use the language of the text; then may he feel, in a manner peculiarly pungent, that he has bestowed his labour in vain.

2. When in a regular use of means, men remain *unreformed.* To secure a constant attendance on means of religion, is of great importance.—Religion cannot flourish till this be accomplished; nor will it flourish then, nor indeed even have existence, unless men go farther than merely to yield an outward conformity to those customs and ceremonies, which are commonly thought decent and indispensable in the service of God. But how many flatter themselves they have done their whole duty, when they have attended the publick worship of God, though rather as spectators, than earnest worshippers !—How many retire

from the house of God, and immediately recommence their habitual course of iniquity!—Content with approving the sermon that condemns their practice, they persist in the neglect of the most essential duties of life. They still venture to commit the sin, which they are solemnly assured will exclude them from the kingdom of heaven. When the minister of Christ perceives persons of this sort sitting insensible as stones under discourses, that might almost awake the dead; in the hearing of reproofs, that would cut a man of common feelings to the heart; when the sound, "Thou art the man," produces no change; when years roll on, and there is no sensible turning to the Lord, no answer to the heavenly call, no motion, not a finger stirred toward the promotion of one work of evangelical obedience; when these carcases of death are still presented from year to year amid the most solemn occasions of religion, and no more symptoms of returning life, than at the beginning; it is time for the preacher to say with St. Paul, "I am afraid," &c.

3. When his labours only provoke opposition. This happened to Christ, to his immediate followers, and more or less to all the preachers of the Gospel, who have tolerably resembled them. The unhumbled are always interested in justifying themselves, and charging with errour such instructions as condemn them. It is no uncommon case for some of the hearers of the Gospel (as the Galatians treated St. Paul) to count their minister an enemy, because he tells them the truth.—Sometimes they are induced to forsake his ministry, suspect his motives, throw out sar-

casms against his measures, to speak disrespectfully of his understanding and his heart, and in various ways to obstruct his interest and usefulness. When any thing like this comes to be the case, He only, who has all hearts in his hands, and causes all their devices to subserve the promotion of his own glory, can determine how far benevolent exertions in behalf of mankind may prove unavailing.

4. When, amid much of the *form* of godliness, there is little or nothing of the *power*. It is not for us to determine in all cases, when such is the state of things. At all times, both ministers and people have reason to dread and watch against it. A round of duties may be performed, and yet the heart wax more and more averse to the real spirit of the Gospel. Its humiliating truths may only inflame pride, and rouse up that hostility, which is but too natural to every child of apostate Adam. The life may be regular, and the heart cold—prayer may be made, without a spark of devotion—petitions may be offered, with a secret hope in the mind, that they may not be answered—many works may be done, not to glorify God, but to answer selfish ends—Christ may be professed, without becoming a proper object of trust, even without being regarded with a single right emotion—men may be just in their own eyes, while in the account of God they may be a people, that have no knowledge, and far from righteousness. If such be the state of an individual or a community; if, amid all their regularity, the heart be not devoted to God; if the sin *within* be not forsaken; if the mind be not transformed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost; if

Christ be not esteemed the only Saviour, and above all price, the condition of such a people is deplorable; the prospects of their minister (if his own soul be awake,) is trying in the extreme. Like Herod, such a people may seem to hear gladly and to do many things—yet as to the great affair of salvation, they might as well have never heard of the Gospel. While such is the state of a people, their minister knows that, at present, he labours in vain.

5. When men *hold the truth in unrighteousness.* The doctrines of the Gospel commend themselves so readily to the consciences of men, that many are persuaded of their truth, whose hearts are yet not penetrated by their power. From various sinister motives, not a few zealously advocate right principles, while their practical influence is greatly disregarded; and thus Christ is wounded in the house of his friends. The truth was revealed, not that men might *speculate*, but *live.* Every doctrine of the Gospel is intended to improve the mind and morals of human beings; and whenever the Holy Spirit does indeed take of the things of God, and shew them to the soul, holy fruit must follow. But the truths of revelation often dwell more in the *head* than *heart.* Men allow themselves to be too much directed by impulses on the mind; puffed up with conceit of superiour attainments in the knowledge and favour of God; buoying up their hopes by a perversion of the doctrines of "Christ within:" enlightened, but not sanctified, they are tempted to look down upon others, as from a vast elevation, and not only despise them in their hearts, but sometimes sorely to reproach them with their

tongues. Such persons will not endure sound doctrine. To talk of good tempers, Christian duties, and moral order, is esteemed by them no better than heathen philosophy; and a preacher can scarcely mention good works without suspicion of heresy. When such is the state of a Christian society; when the people relish nothing but dry doctrinal disquisitions, and matters of doubtful disputation, the faithful servant of Jesus Christ has special occasion to tremble for the ark. Persons who have fallen into this errour, usually by an uncommon warmth of feeling, and large expressions of love and zeal, call up the attention of men to remark the more their deficiencies in sobriety and uprightness of deportment; and religion, in consequence, receives an almost incurable wound. In anticipation of such a state of things, Christ cautioned his disciples, "if ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them." St. Paul complains that, by reason of such persons, "the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles;" and declares that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." But in this way, Christ is "set for the rising and falling again of many;" and through them he becomes a "sign to be spoken against." When the minister of Christ sees some in the church carried about with diverse strange doctrines, or defiling themselves by sin, walking openly without shame, as enemies of the cross of Christ; when he perceives others, who had put forth the buddings and blossoms of promise, destroying all hope by an untimely blight; when the love of many waxes cold; when errours in-

crease, corruptions multiply, jealousies, divisions and contests ensue; then is the time when the faithful pastor feels most powerfully of all others, that he has laboured in vain.

III. In the third place, let us contemplate for a few moments the consequences of receiving the Gospel in vain. The Gospel implies the greatest grace, that has ever been made known to the world. Preaching is the ordinary method, in which it has pleased God to display this grace to their view, and to inculcate it upon the mind. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." When, therefore, by the preaching of the word, the heart of man becomes susceptible of religion in its genuine power and influence, the enmity is slain; the needful change of regeneration has passed; the whole man is deliberately devoted to Christ, and every faculty prevailingly yields itself to his service. When the word becomes effectual, the Christian pastor becomes a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, a savour of life unto life. The change, that takes place in the hearer, has ordinarily a distinguished effect in the circle in which he moved; and especially upon the whole course of his own future existence. While in this world, he has reason to thank God, through Jesus Christ, for the blessing of redemption, and for numberless others, which are inseparably attached to it. His life now bears the character of wisdom, where folly and madness once reigned unrivalled. He now steadily pursues the noblest ends by the most proper means. He lives as

one, who designs to live forever. His sentiments, conversation and behaviour, bear a marked reference to that inevitable hour, when the frail tabernacle of flesh must be dissolved. When that hour arrives, he quits the world with a song of triumph on his tongue. Death, that seems to destroy, lays the foundation for permanent glory. It brings him home to God; and he goes to enjoy, in the bosom of his reconciled Father, that fulness of joy, of which already he has received precious foretastes.—When the word preached is without profit, there is of course a most awful reverse. Folly is then conspicuous, the lamp of wisdom glimmers and trembles, in order to its going out forever. Present comforts are scanty and perishing. Respecting the future, fears and dreadful stupidity alternately prevail. Death is dreaded, but never prepared for. The soul, as the ground that "beareth thorns and briars, is rejected and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." As therefore the effectual preaching of the word is that which instrumentally saves men; whenever the same word is resisted and despised, it must operate as a "ministration of condemnation." The preacher is a watchman, stationed on the walls of Zion by her own everlasting King. If the people hear his warning and turn, their souls are delivered; but if they hear not, neither turn at his reproof, they will die in their sin, and their blood be upon their own heads. The sinner has not rejected man, but God. He has affronted not only supreme majesty, but he has despised unrivalled mercy. The faithful pastor is afraid for his impenitent hearers, and he has reason for his fears. If they persist in causing

him to labour with them in vain, having had much bestowed upon them, much will be required. Instead of exulting in them as his "joy and crown in the day of the Lord Jesus," he must hear the dread denunciation, "Depart ye cursed," &c.

Reflections.—1. We discover the deep ruin that involves the human family. This is declared in that economy of grace, which the Father of mercies has contrived in order to repair the ruins of the fall; but still more deeply and awfully is the same fact declared, in the incredible abuse, which mankind in all ages have heaped upon the Gospel. It were natural to suppose, that men, as lost creatures, would hail Christ as the delight of the human kind; would bow the knee to him in ecstacy of joy, and inquire into the contents of his Gospel with more eager search, than they employ, who dig for hidden treasure. But when we behold the wickedness, the errour, the profane abuse, the misconceptions of these sacred truths, into which men fall, and in which they remain with apparent contentment; when we behold the evasions, the false reasonings, the refuges of lies, to which so many resort, and from which it is so difficult to drive them; and when the conviction forces itself upon us, that all these methods are devised in order to elude the force and strictness of the religion of Christ; when we contrast this conduct of the sinner, with the inexpressible love of Christ, and the boundless liberality of God the Father, we are obliged to perceive, that the depravity of the natural heart is great, great beyond expression, and baffling all attempt at apology.

2. Preaching appears to be one of the most important employments. It is the institution of God. It has pleased him, that the most important interests of human beings for time and eternity should be placed in indissoluble connexion with a faithful dispensation of the word. It has been the means of reformation and final rescue of millions of mankind from the pressure of present evils, and from the wrath to come. It will be the means of comfort and salvation to millions more even to the end of time. It is represented in Scripture as a high honour conferred upon man, and the first of men are unworthy of such a distinction. St. Paul speaks of himself as the chief of sinners, who was yet honoured of God to be put into the ministry; and he confesses that he was not fit to be called an Apostle. The preaching of the Gospel is an office, too, that attaches to it some of the most remarkable promises of God. "Faith (says the Apostle) cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God—how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" The importance of preaching appears from a survey of the nature and state of man. Our fellow-creatures are busied in various worldly occupations. They need a minister to investigate sacred truth for them, who can give himself wholly to these things, and can teach others, what they have not leisure to find out for themselves. Men are forgetful: if it were not the stated duty of some one to put them in mind, the knowledge of the most important truths would be in a short time wholly lost. Men are *averse* to the Gospel: if God had not raised up and maintain-

ed in his ministers, able and watchful advocates for the truth, the Gospel had long since been utterly perverted, religion had been a mass of corruption—and errour, wickedness, and consequent misery, had overspread the earth. We have seen already, how many are the occasions of fear in the breast of a minister of Christ, arising from the corruptions of men. How much would these occasions be multiplied, and the sum of human evil in this world and the next be increased, were there no preachers of righteousness to reprove sin, and, in the name of the Most High, to place themselves in opposition to the overwhelming floods of errour and impiety!

3. The work of the ministry is an anxious task. The Apostles of Christ past through unparalleled trials and hardships in preaching the Gospel.—There are trials, fears and perplexities now, and ever will be, while human nature remains the same. None can describe, how much is implied in fully preaching the Gospel of Christ. When we consider the depth of the mysteries revealed; the character of the Author of revelation, and that of the beings to whom it is made; the nature of its truths; the almost endless variety of characters, to whom they are to be applied; and that the eternal life, or endless perdition of the hearers must be the consequence; the preaching of the Gospel appears at once difficult, and calculated to impress the mind with a sense of mighty responsibility.

Dear Brother in Christ—You are now about to take upon yourself this weighty trust. Soon the hands of the presbytery will be laid upon you; after

being devoted to God in prayer, you will receive a solemn charge to be faithful in the sacred office. In the prospect are you ready to exclaim, "who is sufficient for these things?"—Remember him who hath said, "my grace is sufficient for you," and learn to go forth to your labours relying on that divine promise. The trials, that come to all, may fall heavily upon you. If you intend in all cases to please God, rather than even the *best* of men, this must be your case. But be not disheartened. Never for a moment think of suppressing the mention of important truth from fear of human opposition; but prudently, affectionately and plainly preach the Gospel of Christ. We hope, that the desire of exalting the divine glories of the Saviour, and presenting a large number of purified souls to him, as the trophies of his victorious grace, will stimulate you to unwearied exertions in the sacred calling. We hope the Spirit of God will guide you into all truth, and enable you to speak to others from experimental knowledge. As has been related of an ancient Christian bishop, who, being made the blessed instrument of converting almost a whole city from idolatry to the faith of Christ, being informed on his death-bed, that three or four individuals still remained, addicted to the pagan rites, devoutly called God to witness, how much it pained his soul, that *so many* remained in an unconverted state; so with regard to yourself, dear sir, may the thought of a *few* souls perishing forever, be most affecting, and prove sufficient to arouse you to strenuous action. Remember him, who hath said, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And now,

Brother, "we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them, that are sanctified."

4. It is a solemn consideration, that any people has a minister of Christ to dwell among them. Their duties are reciprocal. If it be incumbent on him to teach, it is no less so on them to learn. If he be among them by the appointment of God, they must one day give account for the kind of reception they have given him. Brethren of this church and society, we trust you have this day one to be set over you in the Lord, who will approve himself a "pastor after God's own heart, to feed you with knowledge and understanding." We hope he will be kindly entertained among you, and that you will endeavour that your love for him burn with an intense and an increasing flame. Remembering how much oftener separation between minister and people is effected through an insensible diminution of respect and tenderness towards each other, than by any signal failure, be not forward to notice trivial faults; but carefully conceal them with the mantle of charity. Wait on his ministry with constancy, patience and candour. Bear a part in all his afflictions. Let him not suffer inconvenience by parsimoniously withholding from him your support in temporal things. Let it not be thought a great thing, that he reaps of your carnal things, while he sows to you spiritual things. You cannot better "honour the Lord with your substance," than by bestowing a liberal portion of it on him, that labours with you in the word and doctrine. If your minister

be suffered by you to remain weighed down with a load of cares, arising from embarrassed circumstances, you will eventually defraud your own souls. Pray for him, that the Lord's pleasure may prosper in his hands; that his "doctrine" may "drop as the rain, and distil as the dew—as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers, that water the grass." Bear in mind the eternal results of this day's solemnities. If your minister labour with you in vain, he will be to you a "savour of death unto death." Dying impenitent, your condemnation will be greater than that of fallen angels, who have never received the overtures of mercy. But if you receive his words, you will be a "people saved of the Lord." He will cause all things to "work together for good." "The Lord God will be a sun and shield; he will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from such as are upright in heart."

Let this numerous assembly suffer a word of exhortation. As the creatures of God's power, you are destined for another world. For this transition, the preaching of the Gospel is intended to prepare you. Some of you, it is hoped, will be the better for the admonitions you have heard from the lips of the servants of God, throughout eternal ages. Others, with means equally perfect, may have been hitherto "waxing worse and worse;" their slumbers have been deepening; their marks of reprobation are constantly growing more apparent. Ministers and people will have a solemn interview at the tribunal of Christ. Very soon *they* will be exhibited to assembled worlds, either as "faithful stewards of the mysteries of God," or else

receive the indelible stigma of having done the "work of the Lord deceitfully." At that time it will be said to every one of you, either, "Well done, good and faithful servants;" or else, "Depart ye cursed!" I will not attempt to describe, what our feelings will be on that momentous season. But, dwelling much on such meditations, let your hearts be enlarged in prayer for the ministers of Christ, that they spend not their strength for nought; and for yourselves, "that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."—AMEN.

CHARGE.

BY THE REV. HENRY LINCOLN,

OF FALMOUTH.

Dearly beloved Brother in the Lord,

IN the name of the *Ordaining Council*, here convened, I do now solemnly charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, that thou take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. Many precious souls, over whom thou art now ordained, who are bound with thee to the judgment, will henceforth be looking up to thee for thy prayers, thine instructions and example, to point out to them the way of deliverance from the wrath to come, and the narrow path, which leads to the kingdom of glory.

Look well then to thine own heart, and see that it be right with God, that with right views and feelings, thou mayest ever address the consciences and hearts of men. Take heed to thyself and all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made thee overseer, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Preach the word. Handle it not deceitfully. Preach it clearly, pungently and experi-

mentally. Teach not for doctrines the commandments of men; and although the time is come, when many will not endure sound doctrine, yet fail not to declare to them all the counsel of God, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Teach not smooth things. Prophecy not deceits. Seek not to please men, especially of corrupt minds, lest you be not the servant of Christ. While the subject of discourse is solemn, let the manner of address be sweet. Speak the truth in love. The most important truths are often lost to the hearer by a severe and forbidding manner of communication. By your instructions and your life, always let your people understand, that you are determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Preach the discriminating doctrines of the cross, although most offensive to the carnal heart—although they be a stumbling block to Jewish prejudices, and folly to Grecian wisdom. Proclaim to sinners the entire depravity of the natural heart, and the infinite evil of sin. Tell them they are debtors to the whole law, and can make no restitution for sin, and that by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified.—Point them to the infinite atonement of the Lamb of God. Declare fully and forcibly the eternal and essential divinity of Jesus Christ, that all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. Teach sinners that they must be born again, or they cannot see the kingdom of God. Inform professors of religion, that the best evidence of their renovation is love and good works, and that the necessary consequence of a new heart is a new life. Declare God to be a

holy and righteous Sovereign, and dwell with pleasing admiration on his electing love to his dear chosen ones. Fear not to say, that he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Enforce obedience by the eternal and tremendous sanctions of the holy law. Say you to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for he shall eat of the fruit of his doings; wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him; and that at the last judgment, these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Search the Scriptures with persevering diligence, that thou mayest be a scribe well instructed, bringing out of thy treasure things new and old. Look well to the state of thy flock, and feed, with a shepherd's tender care, the sheep and lambs of Christ's pasture. Administer the holy ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper to the proper subjects, and bless the people in the name of the Lord.

Direct in the discipline of the church, and purge out the old leaven, that it may be wholly a new lump. Be more disposed to prayer, than to vain disputation, and look to the wisdom which is from above, rather than to that which is from beneath, to direct thee. Assist in the ordination of all whom you believe God has called and qualified for the sacred work of the ministry. Frequently visit your people, to know their spiritual condition. Counsel and pray with the sick and the dying, and comfort those that mourn. Be instant in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. Pa-

tiently endure, and as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good. Thus let thy holy and blameless life be a living comment on thy preaching. —Be thou faithful unto death, and Christ shall give thee a crown of life which fadeth not away.

And now, dear Brother, go forth in the strength of the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, and contend earnestly for the faith. And may the Lord bless thee with a long life and an useful ministry, and give thee many precious souls, at last, as the crown of thy joy and eternal rejoicing in the great day of the Lord.—AMEN.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY DAVID L. HUNN, A. M.
Pastor of the Calvinistic Congregational Church and Society in Sandwich.

THERE is an *intimate*, and an *indissoluble* union subsisting between all the churches of Christ.

They are established upon the *same immovable* basis; are actuated by the same inspiring motives; and are unitedly engaged in promoting the same benevolent object—the glory of God in the salvation of men. However separated from each other by time or place, sea or land, they are all *one* in Christ Jesus.

This lays a foundation for a most intimate and endearing relation to subsist between all their respective spiritual members.

They all belong to the same kingdom—they have all one God, one Redeemer, one Sanctifier. They have all drunk at the same fountain; and been all nourished with the same spiritual bread. They are all contending with the same enemies; are all struggling against the same trials; are all pursuing the same course; are all following the same leader; and will all, ultimately, arrive at the same place, and engage, conjointly, in the same blissful employment, forever.

Such are, indeed, all branches of the *same* vine, all members of the *same* body, and have all one hope of their calling.

They are connected by a celestial bond, the *strength* of which neither intervening rivers nor mountains, oceans nor seas, can ever break or impair.

Does *such* a union subsist between all the churches of Christ, and between all their respective spiritual members?—Then who can doubt the propriety of giving the *right hand of fellowship*, on occasions like the present?

But there is *another* consideration, which renders *this* part of our ordination service still more pertinent and interesting.

Ministers of the Gospel are united to each other by ties *still stronger*, if possible, than are those, which bind together the great Christian family. They cherish a *fellow-feeling* peculiar to themselves. They have pains and pleasures, sufferings and enjoyments, with which the stranger intermeddleth not.

Being engaged in the same *delightful*, yet *arduous* service; feeling, in a degree, the same tremendous responsibility; and experiencing, at times, the same almost insupportable trials, they are prepared, at once, to enter into each other's feelings—to bear a portion of each other's burdens—and mutually to participate in each other's joys and sorrows.

This consideration, my dear Brother, is calculated to *lighten*, in a degree, the almost insupportable burden, which, it is presumed, *now* presses upon you.

Comforting must be the reflection, that you are surrounded by those, who have felt what you now

feel, and who, in consequence, are prepared to *relieve* you, in some measure, by their sympathetic emotions for you.

In *their* name, and at their request, I now, dear sir, give you this *right hand*. I give it to you most cordially. It is a pledge of our Christian and ministerial affection for you. By this significant token, first instituted by the Holy Ghost, in reference to the ministerial work, we cheerfully acknowledge you as a brother, and fellow-labourer with us in the Gospel vineyard.

Accept it, therefore, as expressive of the welcome reception we give you to the sacred office of the ministry; and of the joy that we feel in inducting you, as a *labourer*, into this interesting portion of the Lord's heritage.

Accept it, as expressive of our *confidence* in your ability to discharge the duties of the office, with which you have this day been invested—as expressive, too, of our belief that you have been taught of God; that you have undertaken, from *right* motives, to preach the Gospel; and that you will keep back nothing that may be *profitable* to your hearers—but with zeal and fidelity, declare the *whole counsel* of God, and thus show yourself "a *workman* that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Accept it, also, as expressive of our readiness to establish and maintain ministerial and Christian intercourse with you, and with the church, whose oversight you have received in trust.

So long as you continue earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to adorn the

doctrines of God your Saviour in all things, so long will we, with all readiness of mind, cooperate with you;—so long will we hold ourselves in readiness to advise and consult with you, and, as occasion requires, to assist you in the *great* and *good*, but arduous, difficult, self-denying and responsible work, on which you have *voluntarily* entered, and to which you are now *solemnly* consecrated.

But I would *again*, my Brother, request you to accept this right hand, not in compliance with the direction of my fathers and brethren, who have assisted in your ordination, *simply*, but as expressive of my own personal interest in the transactions of this day.

With devout thankfulness would I recognize the hand of God in preparing the way for the establishment of one of *Andover's* sons, in this section of the Lord's heritage.

Greatly would I rejoice that the Lord is directing destitute churches to apply to that School of the Prophets, for pastors to break to them the bread of life. Greatly would I rejoice that the Lord has directed *this* church to make such application; and that *you*, my Brother, have been designated to fill this important station.

With no *ordinary* feelings, be assured, do I discharge the duty assigned me, of welcoming you *hither* as a minister of Jesus. May the flame of Christian benevolence, enkindled in that sacred seminary, whose inestimable privileges you have been permitted to enjoy, never decline till you are prepared to adopt the triumphant language of the great Apostle—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have

kept the faith, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory." Yet permit me to remind you (without dampening the ardour of your feelings) that you are entering the Lord's vineyard at a *time*, when the Christian minister must expect trials. Indeed, the business, to which you have set your *hand*, and we trust, your *heart*, has *always* been attended with trials: but various circumstances seem *now* to indicate, that trials of no ordinary kind await those, who faithfully advocate the cause of truth. Errour is abroad in the earth; its advocates are *numerous*, if not *powerful;* and with *us*, who have espoused the cause of *truth*, it becomes a question, involving momentous consequences, whether we shall give up the contest, yield the points in debate, and throw away the very *essence* of the Bible, or endeavour, to the best of our abilities, to defend, support, and establish the fundamental doctrines of revelation.

The *former*, *I* cannot do. The *latter*, in conjunction with your fathers and brethren, I trust *you* will zealously attempt.

But I again remind you that, in doing this, you must anticipate trials. You must expect to meet with opposition—with opposition that will, at times, try your faith, your patience, your prudence, and your every Christian grace. Yet, be not disheartened. The Lord is on your side. The cause of truth will prevail. Wield, skilfully, the weapons of the Christian warfare, and you have nothing to fear.

May the good Lord guide you, my dear Brother, and bless you, and give you to see great things in Nantucket. Great things will, unquestionably, be

done here in time; and may your eyes see them; may your labours and prayers help them forward.

After the part we have taken in the transactions of this day, God forbid that we should forget your insulated situation, or cease to pray unto *Him*, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, that he would afford you much of his promised presence, assistance and direction; that he would succeed all your ministerial labours; enrich you more and more with the gifts and graces of his Spirit; and make you the honoured instrument of turning *many* to righteousness, who shall, one day, shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever, in the kingdom of God's glory.

The members of this church and society, on whose account we are now assembled, will accept our united and most cordial congratulations.

With devout thankfulness to God would we bow the knee before him, and abundantly utter the memory of his great goodness, in that he hath remembered you in your destitute state, and, as we would humbly hope, provided you a pastor after his own heart.— You need not be told, that we are highly *gratified* in the *choice* which you have made, and in the *commendable* spirit of unanimity, harmony and love, which have *apparently* marked your proceedings in this great concern. No *less* gratified are we in being permitted to contemplate with you the encouraging prospects, which this *solemn* and *auspicious* day opens to your view.

You have now, my brethren and friends of this church and society, beheld the man of your choice, in *solemn* form, by prayer and the imposition of hands,

set over you, as your pastor and teacher. *Receive* him, therefore, with all humility and gratitude. Receive him as a precious gift from *Him*, who is head over all things to the church. Receive him as an ambassador for Christ, who, in his name, is to pray you to become reconciled to God; to deliver to you the messages of eternal truth, and to guide, assist and cheer you on your way to immortal glory. May the endearing relation, this day consummated, between you and him, *long* be continued a source of permanent blessedness to both parties. May *mutual* affection be regarded as the most *substantial* evidence of *success* attending the labours of *him*, whom you will henceforth denominate your beloved pastor.—Long, very long, may you and your children rejoice in the light of his doctrine, and cherish an increased disposition to esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake.

And when all earthly connections shall be dissolved, may *you* and *he*, may *each* and *all* of us, be so unspeakably happy as to have an *open* and an *abundant* entrance ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—Amen.